SPOILS OF WAR:

HOW INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE CAN INFLUENCE LOCAL PROCESSES OF ECONOMIC CHANGE

THE CASE OF AFGHANISTAN

by

Catherine M. Koza

B.A. Barnard College
(1983)

Submitted to the Department of
Urban Studies and Planning
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF CITY PLANNING

at the

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

May 1990

Signature of Author _____
Department of Urban Studies and Planning

Certified By _____
Gillian Hart
Lecturer, Department of Urban Studies and Planning
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted By _____
Don Schon, Chairman
Department Graduate Committee
Department of Urban Studies and Planning

SPOILS OF WAR:
HOW INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE CAN INFLUENCE
LOCAL PROCESSES OF ECONOMIC CHANGE
THE CASE OF AFGHANISTAN

by

CATHERINE M. KOZA

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies
and Planning in May 1990 in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of City Planning

ABSTRACT

During the last ten years, rural Afghanistan has received more humanitarian assistance involving more international assistance agencies than any other war-affected region in the developing world. This cross-border assistance, which is typically administered by U.S. and European non-governmental organizations based in Pakistan, has been been used to support rehabilitation projects in the rural areas despite the ongoing war.

This paper examines the program approaches adopted by two of the most significant international agencies sponsoring agricultural rehabilitation inside Afghanistan. The basic objectives of these agencies, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), are different. However, both support projects through the same mechanisms--the various non-governmental organizations operating inside Afghanistan--and experience the same constraints in these operations, which provide limited access and information to project planners. As a result, by working through the same kinds of implementing agencies and under the same conditions, the impact of these different programs in rural Afghanistan may be very much the same.

This paper considers the similarities and differences between these two agencies in their cross-border programs. This paper concludes that rehabilitation supported by both agencies may create local conflicts and ultimately complicate the postwar rehabilitation process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to the 1989 Carroll Wilson Memorial Award Committee at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. By supporting my plan to spend a summer doing research among international assistance agencies and Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the committee provided me a priceless opportunity. This award gave me a chance to travel, ask questions, and gather material with considerable independence.

This was the beginning of my actual involvement in refugee affairs. I hope to justify the committee's investment in me by continuing to be independent and questioning in my future work in this field.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: The Case of Afghanistan.....1

Chapter One: How the War Has Affected Rural Afghanistan.....6

Chapter Two: What the U.S. Agency for International Development Has Been Doing.....18

Chapter Three: What the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner For Refugees Has Been Doing....34

Chapter Four: What Kind of Constraints International Agencies Face in Afghanistan.....41

Chapter Five: Why Outside Assistance Is Problematic Inside Afghanistan.....49

Chapter Six: What Are the Implications of International Assistance at the End of a War.....55

Bibliography.....60

Annexes.....63

INTRODUCTION:

THE CASE OF AFGHANISTAN

During the past ten years, rural Afghanistan has received more humanitarian assistance through more international relief agencies than any other war-affected region in the world. This assistance represents both the humanitarian impulse and degree of political support that has emerged in response to the Afghanistan conflict. The plight of the Afghans--since 1979, engaged in a bitter war against a fledgling communist government--has inspired significant support by European and American donors alike, including one bilateral agency, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Afghanistan represents an unusual case among war-affected areas not only because of the amount of international assistance it has received, but because this assistance provides more than simply emergency relief to this war-torn country. Throughout the war, donor funds have also supported a considerable number of developmental activities in the rural areas. In this way, international agencies have been regularly supporting rehabilitation efforts during the course of war. The reasons behind the success or failure of these efforts may provide important lessons in the future

for planners of postwar reconstruction. By considering the different approaches of international agencies supporting rehabilitation inside Afghanistan, this study examines the implications and effectiveness of projects of this kind.

The rehabilitation activities underway in Afghanistan are unprecedented in scope. Supported largely by grants from USAID and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have been planning and administering small-scale agricultural rehabilitation projects in various districts throughout rural Afghanistan. This study specifically examines the kinds of projects funded by USAID and UNHCR, the operational constraints they have faced, and how these efforts--which tend to favor areas with relatively strong political organizations--may produce conflict between project areas and the state following the resolution of war.

In the case of Afghanistan, two different sets of objectives underlie these rehabilitation efforts. By helping to restore the production potential of the rural areas, international donors hope to facilitate the eventual return of the massive Afghan refugee population. This means working with Afghans who have remained in Afghanistan to increase the food-producing capacity of areas to which refugees are expected to return. At the same time, donors support the

provision of production and rehabilitation assistance to rural Afghanistan as a means of supporting the cause of the mujaheddin resistance. By supplying essential agricultural inputs to the rural areas, donors intend to strengthen the production potential of this population in its struggle against the Soviet-backed government.

The program approach of USAID and UNHCR, respectively, represent these two different objectives. By providing humanitarian assistance to the rural areas, USAID supports the struggle of the resistance against the Soviet-backed communist regime and to promote stability in anticipation of success by the mujaheddin in its war. Rather than provide comprehensive rehabilitation assistance to rural Afghanistan, UNHCR, by contrast, provides emergency assistance to the areas to which most Afghan refugees specifically are expected to return.

Although these two agencies vary greatly in terms of their objectives, in certain respects the implications of their programs are very much the same. In the case of Afghanistan, USAID and UNHCR support rehabilitation projects, which are planned and implemented without a recognized government, in much the same way as they support projects which require the cooperation of the government through which they occur. By strengthening project areas in

the absence of government, rehabilitation assistance efforts may strengthen the bases of political support of local leaders and establish areas likely to be hostile to government following the resolution of war.

In the absence of government, both USAID and UNHCR rely heavily upon the implementing capacity of NGOs inside Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, this means that the programs of these two agencies are carried out by a diverse group of implementors, many of which individually depend upon political alliances to implement their activities. In this setting, each NGO assumes a quasi-governmental role, strengthening the project area in which it operates. In so doing, each NGO creates areas that may be disinclined to recognize the authority of an official government structure after the resolution of war. By working through NGOs with similar approaches and typically limited field experience, both agencies support projects that employ similar means while intending to arrive at different goals.

The role of NGOs in rehabilitation projects differs from the role of NGOs in other development efforts. While administering projects that channel assistance into Afghanistan, NGOs operate with incomplete information, depend largely upon local political alliances, and rely upon Afghan monitors with scant background in monitoring and

evaluation to report on the progress of project sites. This report shows how the program approaches of USAID and UNHCR result in the strengthening of project areas about which only a limited amount can be known.

The following report considers how much room there is for international agencies to maneuver in situations of this kind. Judging from the Afghanistan case, it is clear that USAID and UNHCR have few options when designing and implementing rehabilitation projects. During war, agencies operate under conditions in which political alliances, irregular access to project sites, and severely limited information together shape these projects. It may in fact be impossible to avoid creating potential conflicts by supporting project areas. By examining the experiences of USAID and UNHCR in Afghanistan, however, it is possible to consider what kind of options exist for agencies operating in a country engaged in conflict.

CHAPTER ONE:

HOW THE WAR HAS AFFECTED RURAL AFGHANISTAN

This section provides a brief outline of the factors that led to war in Afghanistan and the subsequent exodus of a large number of its people to neighboring Pakistan and Iran, where they currently live as refugees. This will help to explain how rural Afghanistan has been affected and, in some cases, transformed by the war. With this information, it may be possible to draw some conclusions about how international assistance itself can influence the changes that occur in rural areas during times of war and political conflict.

In the late 1970s, Afghanistan became engaged in a war that has since triggered the flight of some six million refugees from the countryside (USCR 1990). Additionally, it is estimated that nearly two million individuals have been internally displaced within country. Throughout the war, most of the internally displaced have migrated to Afghanistan's urban areas, causing some centers--like the capital, Kabul--to reportedly triple in size (English 1989: 17). The absence of this massive population--perhaps one-third of the total prewar population--has disrupted agricultural production, altered traditional forms of leadership, and facilitated the excercise of local political

control by members of the mujaheddin resistance throughout the rural areas.

The war that produced this extraordinary number of refugees was, initially, a counter-revolution. Immediately following the 1978 coup carried out by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), Afghanistan's fledgling communist government initiated a radical program of reforms that targeted the traditional and fiercely independent rural population. This program included land reform, cancellation of most peasant debt, and abolition of the traditional brideprice--itself a significant source of debt among rural Afghans.

In response to attempts by the government to implement these reforms, rural groups throughout Afghanistan began an armed rebellion against the regime and its representatives in the countryside. The inability of the government to suppress the revolts led to direct Soviet intervention in 1979. By the end of 1982, some three million Afghans had registered as refugees in Pakistan alone, having fled the violence and destruction that had completely destabilized the rural areas.

The Afghanistan case is an anomoly in this century of peasant revolution. In Afghanistan, small landholders and

landless farmers, the intended beneficiaries of reform, joined large property owners in revolting against outside attempts to redistribute wealth, to improve the productive capacity of individual holdings, and, above all, to force the change of traditional practices in the rural areas (Gibbs 1986: 36). For many observers, this reveals an intriguing aspect of rural Afghan society: although, according to Afghanistan's 1967 agricultural survey, an estimated twenty percent of Afghan landholders owned nearly seventy-five percent of the rural holdings (IBRD 1978), large landholders were not the instigators and leaders of this counter-revolution.

In fact, landlords were rarely the ones to call for revolt. This decision was usually made by local clergy or the village representative, called the malik. Afghan observers have noted that landlords, in fact, did not initially regard the new government as communist. Until the agrarian reform was actually implemented, many believed that they would continue to work cooperatively with the regime, when necessary (Roy 1986: 150-152). Consequently, the peasant population appears to have been more actively involved than the large landholders in this rebellion.

During the course of the war, the influence of large landholders has been replaced by the influence of political

and religious leaders, who play a far greater role in the resistance. At the same time, less influential individuals have also gained power they did not have prior to the war. Smallholders, for example, have acquired arms and considerable political clout as a result of their participation in the resistance (Roy 1986: 165). Additionally, local commanders, appointed by resistance parties, have assumed significant responsibility for both strategic planning and civil administration in the areas they currently control.

Despite such power shifts, rural Afghans have been influenced by the war in one very noticeable respect: both refugees and those remaining in the countryside have become more rigorous in their adherence to traditional Islamic practices. The defense of Islam against state encroachment defined the Afghan resistance. As a result, traditional Islamic structures and practices have assumed greater importance in rural Afghanistan during the war. This is exemplified by the strict adoption during the war of shari'at law, which is administered locally by religious scholars, members of the 'ulama. Despite changes in local leadership, the war appears to have heightened the wariness of rural Afghans to outside influence, increased rural cohesiveness, and tightened resistance against any attempt to alter the practice of local Islamic traditions.

As a result of the war, local influence in Afghanistan is no longer determined by the economic power that a single individual--the large landlord or khan--wields within the community. Instead, in the current social order a complex network of military, party and religious leaders control the rural areas at both the district and provincial level. In parts of the north, reportedly it is not uncommon for the sons of local khans to become local commanders within the resistance. In most areas, however, the khan and his relations are considered ill-suited to the task of organizing within the party structure (Roy 1986: 151). The khan's influence is largely secular and individualistic, determined by patronage. For these reasons, mujaheddin leaders have generally made an effort to exclude local landlords from participating in the resistance movement (Roy 1986: 150-152).

Although the influence of the khan has diminished during the past decade, an examination of this critical role reveals much about the traditional structure of rural society. The khan is not a feudal lord nor are members of his community vassals. Instead, the power of the khan stems from his ability to maintain equilibrium while dispensing favors, mediating disputes and looking after the communities' most vulnerable members. The community--

typically the patrilineal qawm--invests the khan with his power and permits him to excercise authority in local decision-making.

In response to the war, rural communities have shifted their support away from the khan and assigned the right to govern to political and religious leaders associated with the local resistance (Roy 1986: 150-152). Whether former khans will fully regain their authority after the war remains unclear. In the meantime, rural communities have established a parallel structure of local decision-making and control, which is entirely determined by political and religious leaders whose authority is similarly sanctioned by the population that remains.

Although Afghan observers maintain that local traditions will most likely remain unchanged by the war, individual power shifts have occurred throughout rural Afghanistan that will determine how--and to whom--local power is transferred during the postwar period. In some cases, khans will probably be permanently displaced by leaders who emerged during the resistance. This is most likely to occur in areas where public opinion holds that specific landlords failed to adequately support the Islamic resistance and the local mujaheddin. Many believe, however, that khans will likely regain their past influence, particularly in areas where

war-affected communities have remained cohesive despite the war.

To some Afghan observers, it appears that landlords who abandoned their land and failed to participate in local resistance may have difficulties reclaiming their holdings after the war. Indeed, many large landholders left the country without contributing to resistance efforts. Officials from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) note that during the early years of the war large landholders comprised a significant presence among newly-arrived refugees (Gabaudan 1989; Ice 1989).

Olivier Roy points out that in the tribal areas, where the rivalry between khan and 'ulama is particularly acute, the most influential landlords appear to have left the country altogether--some after attempting to organize the resistance within their tribe (Roy 1986: 150-152). In these areas, the landlords who have chosen to remain are the equivalent of small landed gentry; the great families have generally gone.

During the postwar period, property disputes are also likely to occur in areas that have maintained a labor surplus during the war. In many cases, abandonned lands have been cultivated despite the absence of landowners. In fact,

there are reports that scouts reclaiming land rights on behalf of refugee landlords have been met by local farmers demanding payment for their labor--compensation for having cultivated land that would have otherwise become fallow. In some cases, local farmers have demanded payment expressly in the form of a share of the landlord's former holding (Gabaudan 1989).

In other cases, land ownership may be jeopardized for purely political reasons. According to Afghan observers, it is possible that some landlords will face retribution for not having participated in the resistance. Based upon reports from the field, there are indications that, in such cases, the local party may withhold some portion of land belonging to landholders specifically considered to have abandonned the resistance (Etienne 1990). This is likely to occur in areas where the resistance has broken traditional bonds, thus weakening local loyalties towards the previous authorities. During the course of the war, many commanders have drawn supporters from different tribes, clans and sometimes even ethnic groups, thereby cross-cutting loyalties which help to weaken traditional ties (Carter & Connor: 15).

According to recent reports, political parties are controlling abandonned land in a way that may impact local

production practices after the war. Recent missions into Kunar Province by a team representing the United Nations Office of the Coordinator for Afghanistan (UNOCA) found it was common for local resistance leaders to arrange to cultivate land belonging to their followers in Pakistan (UNOCA 1989c: 9). In such cases, the party typically retains half the crop. Under these circumstances, UNOCA noted a food surplus; according to the mission, food produced on abandoned land is subsequently sold to political parties.

Indeed, in some respects the flight of refugees from the countryside has actually benefitted the rural areas. Prior to the war, population increases were leading to an overall land shortage (Roy 1986: 171)--a considerable concern in rural Afghanistan, where estimates hold that only eight percent of the total land area is arable (IBRD 1978). The absence of such a large proportion of the rural population has greatly reduced population pressure on land production. Lack of inputs, significant loss of farm power, and the destruction of irrigation and storage facilities, however, continue to pose a considerable production constraint.

In some parts of Afghanistan, entire communities have been abandonned. Smaller tribes have often fled collectively to neighboring countries, thus abandonning all land belonging to its members. This phenomenon, considered a

"protest exodus," is a passive form of protest against the occupation of Muslim territory by infidels. Although most rural Afghans defend Islam through armed struggle, the Koran also permits protest through flight (Roy 1985: 165). The protest exodus is typically organized by the most influential local families and involves all community members.

This type of flight enables a group to resettle together and maintain its cohesion while living abroad as refugees. Although it is not known whether tribal villages have been occupied by other internally displaced groups, it seems that at least within the organized parties of the resistance leaders respect property rights in accordance with shari'at law.

Relatively more is known about land transfer practices among the ethnic Pashtun, who dominate the seven provinces directly across the Pakistan border. Pashtun landholders typically leave their holdings in the hands of a relative. Initially, those who left tended to abandon their holdings in response to the threat of land reform and redistribution; as the war progressed, flight became a response to violence and the drastically decreased production resulting from war (Gabaudan 1989). Those who flee, however, typically maintain close links with their villages.

The border betwen Afghanistan and Pakistan is extremely porous, permitting relatively free travel access for refugees wishing to check on the state of their village, their land and their home. Pashtun and other refugee groups who originate from areas inside the border appear to be taking full advantage of this access. Since the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, UNHCR refugee camp monitors note that refugees have been sending family members across the border to assess damage to homes and lands and, in some cases, to attempt to resume cultivation (Gabaudan 1989).

In cases where refugees have some access to their homeland, it seems that the connections between refugees and their villages have been largely unaffected by absence due to war. Because refugees are able to assert their right to ownership, land disputes are less likely to occur in these areas. In areas where access is possible, there is typically regular communication between villages and the refugee camps, thus ensuring that bonds remain strong.

There are indications that, in some areas, the war has created an active land market. This has been most noticeable among the Pashtun, who are renowned for their trading skills and entrepreneurial savvy. This group, which comprises some

62% of the Afghan refugee population in Pakistan, is less constrained by communal ties than other tribal groups. Pashtun typically flee as families rather than as larger, communal units. When Pashtuns arrive in their place of exile, the larger social groups of which they are part do not re-form. Consequently, this type of exodus has tended to break down social bonds (Roy 1986: 166). The refugee experience, it seems, has accelerated the potential for socio-economic change among the Pashtun.

Indeed, Pashtun appear to be profiting from other, less fortunate members. According to reports from within the refugee camps, land speculators among the Pashtun purchased small holdings from destitute refugees at throwaway prices throughout the war (Gabaudan 1989). Most Afghan observers believe that, in accordance with traditional practice, any kind of land title transfer will be honored after the war.

These are some of the more visible developments observed by outsiders assessing the impact of the war upon rural Afghanistan. Chapter two will examine how international agencies that provide agricultural rehabilitation assistance to Afghanistan have been operating within this environment.

CHAPTER TWO:

WHAT THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN DOING

The war in Afghanistan has inspired international donors to channel substantial amounts of aid to rural Afghans through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Pakistan. Although initially directed towards relief operations within Pakistan's Afghan refugee camps, international aid currently supports efforts to significantly strengthen the agriculture sector in rural Afghanistan, which remains outside of government control. There are as many different approaches to rehabilitation as there are NGOs: by September 1989 a total of sixty-four international NGOs belonged to one of two NGO coordinating organizations active along the border of Pakistan. It is estimated that at least one hundred international NGOs operate among war-affected Afghans.

This section will focus upon the work of NGOs funded by the two largest supporters of cross-border agricultural rehabilitation in Afghanistan: a bilateral agency, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and a multilateral agency, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This section examines the agricultural

rehabilitation programs designed for Afghanistan by USAID and UNHCR and considers the extent to which these rehabilitation efforts were determined by the conditions in which they operate.

In this section, discussion will be limited to projects supported from the mid-1980s, when USAID began supporting projects in Afghanistan, through the summer of 1989, several months following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. By this point in 1989, it became clear to observers that the war had become a protracted conflict between Afghans and subsequently would not result, as expected, in a large-scale return of Afghan refugees to their homeland. This analysis reflects the way in which USAID and UNHCR responded through their rehabilitation programs to this most recent development in Afghanistan's war.

The U.S. Government continues to provide the only bilateral support to rural Afghanistan. Begun in the spring of 1985, U.S. cross-border assistance initially involved $8 million in grants supporting the health, education and cash-for-food activities of several European NGOs already operating in Afghanistan. At that time, NGOs were largely providing relief rather than rehabilitation assistance to groups inside Afghhanistan. Providing humanitarian assistance through these groups provided the U.S. Government

an opportunity to support rural Afghans in their struggle against the Soviet-backed communist regime.

In the first year of U.S. assistance to Afghanistan, funds were provided out of the Washington-based Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). Because European NGOs operating in Afghanistan were unwilling to accept direct U.S. support for their activities, these funds were channeled through two U.S. NGOs, International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Americares Foundation. This early conflict represents an ambivalence that remains among experienced NGOs operating in Afghanistan through the support of the USAID rehabilitation program.

In 1986, Congress expanded this program, authorizing the creation of a five-year cross-border humanitarian assistance program called the PVO Co-Financing Project. Administered by the Office of the AID Representative (AID/REP) staff in the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, this project supported primarily the health-related activities of selected NGOs, especially medical training for Afghans, including members of the mujaheddin. Several agricultural and educational programs were supported through this project. During this period, IRC and Americares continued to function as intermediaries for the NGOs funded through this program. Although this arrangement is unusual among USAID-funded

programs, it illustrates the difficulties faced by USAID as it has attempted to support rehabilitation in Afghanistan: its program has been determined by the practices established by NGOS operating in Afghanistan.

During the first year of AID/REP activities, financial assistance was also provided to support a cash-for-food program inside Afghanistan. This kind of program involves the direct transport of cash to targeted areas reported to require emergency food assistance. NGOs receiving cash-for-food grants through USAID typically employ Afghan staffmembers to travel to project areas in order to distribute local currency among local residents. Local leaders usually play an important role in these efforts, publicizing the program, assembling the population, and communicating to agency representatives the extent of the need. Cash provides a kind of relief assistance, intended to help war-affected populations achieve self-sufficiency following crisis. Cash-for-food assistance provides international agencies a means to encourage Afghans to remain in their communities rather than to become refugees.

In 1987, Congress increased the budget of the five-year PVO Co-Financing Project to $35 million. In an effort to move away from the provision of cash relief grants, AID/REP

proposed the creation of the Rural Assistance Project (RAP), to be funded separately from the health-oriented activities supported through PVO Co-Financing. RAP was expressly designed to assist war-affected Afghans who wish to remain in their homes. RAP grants supported activities aimed at increasing agricultural productivity and facilitating the provision of food in rural Afghanistan. By providing essential production assistance, RAP grants were intended to help prevent the kind of crisis that produces refugees in when war constraints local capacity for production..

In 1988, USAID signed a two-year cooperative agreement with IRC for $9.4 million. This agreement outlined four specific types of grants to be funded through RAP: survival grants, which provide cash-for-food in areas where the transport of food is especially difficult; emergency assistance, which provides relief to areas impacted by war offensives or natural disaster; and village assistance, which supports local rehabilitation efforts and provides agricultural inputs to secure, potentially productive areas. Resettlement grants, which aim to help returning populations resume agricultural production, were also established, although by the end of 1989 no resettlement projects had yet been funded.

Within six months of the agreement, $7.9 million in

subgrants had been made to eight NGOs, including four U.S.-based agencies, to support projects in thirteen provinces within Afghanistan. The availability of funds clearly resulted in the design of a wide number of NGO projects. Given the number of provinces targeted for rehabilitation projects, it appears that USAID intended to achieve impact throughout Afghanistan. The greater the number--and spread--of sponsored projects, however, the more difficult it becomes for international agencies to control the implementation and monitoring of these efforts. The extreme growth during this period of NGO activities indicates that impact was a greater priority for USAID than viability.

During the same 1987-88 period, AID/REP allocated $13.6 million to support activities funded through the PVO Co-Financing Project. All but one of these grants supported health care activities. In a shift within the project, nearly three-quarters of the grants supported the work of U.S.-based NGOs specializing in health care; the remaining funds continued supporting the health care activities of three of the European NGOs originally financed through this project. In 1989, the PVO Co-Financing Project changed focus entirely, providing medical training and preventative lealth care for Afghans rather than emergency medical services. Funds allocated for PVO Co-Financing were reduced to $900,000 during this period. This reflected a major shift

within the USAID program away from emergency relief assistance in order to support forms of rehabilitation.

The cross-border humanitarian assistance program in Afghanistan is an unusual undertaking for USAID. The role of NGOs in this program is particularly unique--and, to some, unsettling. USAID normally designs an assistance program in conjunction with the host government and employs a contractor to oversee implementation. When an NGO receives a USAID contract, neither USAID nor the host government may participate in or control implementation. In fact, only after its completion can USAID take action against a project it funds: if the performance has not been satisfactory, then the contract may not be renewed. In the Afghanistan case, the application of this contractual approach to rehabilitation enables each USAID-sponsored NGOs to operate independently--unrestrained by the funding agency for the duration of the contract. In this way, each NGO influences its project area independently from the others representing USAID throughout Afghanistan.

NGO projects planned for Afghanistan involve areas that cannot be visited by USAID staff. Throughout the war, the U.S. government has officially restricted the travel of U.S. citizens to Afghanistan. USAID staff and U.S. citizens working for NGOs funded by the U.S. are therefore prohibited

from entering Afghanistan. As a result, NGOs design their projects based upon their experience in areas in which they have established contacts; due to the travel restrictions, implementation is typically carried out by Afghan field staff and project evaluation undertaken by Afghan monitors.

Under these conditions, USAID is necessarily excluded from both project design and evaluation. The agency bases its NGO funding decisions entirely upon the perceived strength of the project, the reliability of the NGO, and the reported operational capacity of its Afghan staff. Because cross-border projects are largely inaccessible, NGOs initiating these projects become responsible both for designing and evaluating their own projects. In a cross-border operation, there is no standard criteria for project evaluation; USAID itself rarely requires funded projects to meet any particular objectives. Consequently, NGOs gauge success based upon the extent to which their project achieves its original objectives.

The Afghanistan program is also unique for USAID because the government recognized by the U.S. is not involved in the NGO project cycle. This has been a source of concern within USAID and among Afghan observers. Although the support of the Afghan Interim Government (AIG) remains a major U.S. policy objective, NGO funds channeled into

Afghanistan neither support nor involve the Peshawar-based AIG, comprised of members of the seven major political parties within the resistance. NGOs, in fact, tend to bypass the AIG entirely in their operations: some consider the AIG incapable of coordinating rehabilitation activities, while others do not believe that the AIG legitimately represents the Afghan people.

In the case of Afghanistan, USAID has taken no steps to require that NGOs cooperate with the AIG, despite the fact that this would reflect standard USAID practice. Instead, USAID has permitted NGOs to define the program. By deviating from its standard pracfice while deferring to agencies operating in Afghanistan, USAID further politicizes a highly charged program.

USAID deviates from its standard practice because these NGO projects do not contribute to the capacity of rural Afghanistan to administer projects in the future. USAID typically acts to strengthen the local institutional capacity of an assisted region by working closely with the host government. Because USAID works directly with NGOs rather than through an official government channel, this cross-border project approach does not permit the kind of institution-building that the agency has traditionally sought to uphold. Unlike most USAID-funded activities, these

NGO operations do not strengthen the capacity of the assisted government to assume responsibility for the project. Instead, NGOs control the design and implementation of its projects on behalf of local beneficiaries. In this way, NGOs strengthen local groups in target areas rather than building an institutional structure to facilitate local administration in the future.

In separate projects, USAID initially attempted to involve the AIG more directly in its efforts to develop several sectors in rural Afghanistan: agriculture, health and education. These sector support projects do not rely upon the various NGOs operating inside Afghanistan. Instead, individual implementing agencies based in Peshawar administer each project through cross-border operations. In terms of scale, level of funding and potential impact, the sector support projects are more significant than USAID's NGO projects. Unlike the NGO projects funded through RAP and PVO Co-Financing, AID/REP also designs these projects and directly controls implementation through the individual contracting agencies assigned to these projects.

AID/REP has contracted with individual agencies to administer each project from field offices in Peshawar. Two of these--Management Sciences for Health, the contractor for the Health Sector Support Project, and University of

Nebraska-Omaha, the contractor for the Education Sector Support Project--implemented projects in Afghanistan prior to the war. Begun in 1987, the three sector support projects were designed to be absorbed by a government representing the Afghan resistance. These projects were designed based upon the assumption that the resistance movement would eventually govern Afghanistan. By operating on this assumption, USAID risks establishing and supporting sectors that may actually be transferred to the Kabul government upon the resolution of war. This scenario would force USAID to either continue supporting these project to some degree or to end its support, despite the resolution of conflict. Neither situation would reflect well on this U.S. agency.

The Agriculture Sector Support Project (ASSP) began in 1987 with Volunteers in Technical Assistance (VITA) in charge of implementation. VITA, an agency based outside of Washington, is known by agriculturalists worldwide for its extensive technical assistance information network. When VITA began operating ASSP, the purpose was twofold: to provide resources intended to support agricultural rehabilitation and increased agricultural productivity as well as to support the growth over time of institutional mechanisms capable of utilizing the resources provided through this project. Whereas USAID's NGO project sidesteps the AIG entirely, this approach presupposes the existence of

an entirely functional government.

In an attempt to work effectively within the Afghanistan context, AID/REP designed ASSP in the form of two distinct tracks. Working with the seven-party Alliance, AID/REP initially planned to help establish a quasi-governmental body to oversee these agricultural rehabilitation efforts. In what was termed Track I of the project, AID/REP anticipated supporting a group of Afghan technocrats, nominated by the alliance parties, to implement this USAID-supported program.

This plan required the creation of a policy-making Agricultural Council from within the party structure. Within a year, AID/REP abandoned Track I because this organization never became fully functional within the party. The reasons for this failure are not outlined in general project documents. Subsequently, USAID did not attempt to include the AIG in other aspects of project planning, except to regularly inform the AIG of its activities. Instead, ASSP began supporting rehabilitation
on a regional level--and local groups for this purpose.

Under a separate project component, AID/Rep also attempted to provide resources to rural Afghanistan by means of the private sector and NGOs. For this part of ASSP, VITA

was enlisted to oversee these early efforts, which were considered Track II. When Track I was abandoned, VITA engaged the former Director of the Department of Rural Works in Afghanistan in its operations. VITA established a rural works program similar to the one that existed prior to the war.

Based upon this prewar model, VITA established specific area development schemes within Afghanistan. These regionally-based projects involved the rehabilitation of local irrigation infrastructure and roads as well as the cleaning of traditional irrigation canals, called karez, in targeted areas. The project planners anticipated that essential inputs like fertilizer, seed, and oxen would also be eventually directed to these areas.

VITA consequently became an early supporter of regional development inside Afghanistan. By late 1988 there were twelve area development schemes supported in eight provinces. In addition to basic inputs, the project areas received tractors, threshers, reapers, bullocks and improved seed varieties. Based on the apparent success of this approach, AID/Rep believed that the area development scheme concept could eventually provide an institutional means through which to channel resources to Afganistan. In this way, VITA's project staff filled a role previously intended

for the Alliance's Agricultural Council and its technical representatives.

To carry out its projects, VITA employed a largely Afghan staff, the majority of whom worked inside Afghanistan. Each area development scheme was assigned an area development officer responsible for identifying projects and coordinating assistance. Local Afghan monitors also worked within the area to evaluate the progress of supported projects. Afghans also handled complex transportation and distribution arrangements, which draw heavily upon the operational capacity of private-sector cross-border activities. These regionally-based projects thus engage both local leaders and entrepreneurs who have emerged during the war. In this way, these projects support those who have assumed or maintained influence during the conflict.

To guarantee effectiveness, AID/REP restricted its agricultural projects to areas that were secure, accessible to Peshawar, and in which local commanders were willing to cooperate with staff presence and project goals. In addition, VITA required that the area contain a traditional local council, or shura, to legitimize project activities, to facilitate communication, and to handle local distribution of all resources provided through the project. Although international agencies consider these councils to

provide the only local institutional capacity to administer rehabilitation assistance, shuras traditionally mediate local disputes rather than local resource allocation and administration. As international agencies like VITA have begun turning to shuras as implementation partners, these councils have become dominated by local party representatives of the mujaheddin.

Once an area was selected for suppport through ASSP, project requests were expected to originate from within the shura. By working through the shura, VITA set out to obtain guarantees that the community would provide twenty to thirty percent of project cost by supplying local labor to rehabilitation efforts. In this way, VITA depended upon beneficiaries to handle distribution and implementation and to contribute to project costs. Because VITA invests the shura with responsibility for all aspects of local project implementation, USAID has no way to determine, however, the extent to which assistance reaches all members within a project area.

Since its inception, this project model been replicated by other agencies. By engaging the local population in some form of project design, implementation, and monitoring, ASSP is considered by its planners to provide Afghan residing in project areas a means to "determine their own destiny," an

objective frequently voiced among international assistance professionals working in Pakistan. USAID considers ASSP to represent an effective approach to regional rehabilitation for these same reasons. By requiring the general participation of local beneficiaries in funded projects, USAID anticipates that these activities represent a viable approach to the rehabilitation of rural Afghanistan. By supporting different projects in various parts of the country, however, USAID's regional rehabilitation is necessarily inconsistent under conditions of war.

CHAPTER THREE:

WHAT THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES HAS BEEN DOING

Following the 1988 Geneva Accords, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) similiarly began planning cross-border agricultural assistance projects for Afghanistan. Because UNHCR's mandate is to protect and to assist refugees outside the border of their homeland, this cross-border activity represents an unprecedented undertaking by UNHCR.

Because Afghan refugees represent the largest refugee population in the world, UNHCR believes that its reponsibility to this massive population includes facilitating their return and initial resettlement in Afghanistan. For UNHCR, cross-border operations in Afghanistan simply represent an extension of its official mandate. By providing emergency rehabilitation assistance to areas to which large numbers of refugees are expected to return, UNHCR supports cross-border projects as a means to ensure that this population can return and resume production in their former homeland once the conflict ends.

Given the mandate of UNHCR to protect refugees, its

cross-border assistance program has a different focus than that of other cross-border programs. Most cross-border activities, like those supported by USAID, support populations that have been less affected by the war and have engaged in sustained agricultural production. These programs support the continuation of these efforts. By contrast, the UNHCR program is specifically aimed at rehabilitating areas from which a substantial proportion of the population has fled in order to create conducive conditions for their return. In this way, UNHCR promotes projects in areas that have undergone extreme changes during war.

Project areas that have suffered considerable population loss tend to have been significantly destroyed. Some remain under threat of violence. In these areas, the remaining population cannot fully represent others who have fled. In some parts, populations fled specifically because the area came under control of a party or commander who members of the community rejected. UNHCR projects attempt to restore the production capacity of project areas to their prewar levels while engaging populations who do not represent the the project area's prewar population.

By September 1989, UNHCR had committed a total of approximately $6 million to support its cross-border operations. Many UNHCR grants support NGOs funded through

USAID for other rehabilitation projects. Additionally, UNHCR provides grants to a number of European NGOs with longer operational experience in Afghanistan than the U.S.-based NGOs increasingly supported by USAID. UNHCR has intentionally structured its funding processes in such a way that the program may readily expand. Funds are available equally to NGOs administering projects in Afghanistan and to NGOs with no working experience in the area, so that newly arrived NGOs may attempt pilot projects and become familiar with the operating conditions of the country. Unlike USAID, which applies its official NGO project approach to the cross-border operations it funds, UNHCR encourages NGOs to experiment within Afghanistan in order to find what works.

UNHCR avoids supporting the formation of political alliances during the course of the rehabilitation process. The UNHCR 1989 Plan of Action, outlining its part in the overall assistance strategy for Afghanistan, expressly states that UNHCR assistance should be implemented by civilian and non-partisan entities (UNHCR 1989). This implies that rehabilitation efforts should avoid strengthening a particular individual or group throughout the process. By acknowledging that the support of political leaders can hinder the repatriation process, UNHCR was the first funding agency to attempt to direct local assistance

expressly to civilians residing in targeted areas.

This approach has expanded since the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in February 1989. As the war among Afghans continued despite the Soviet withdrawal, UNHCR altered its repatriation plan to allow for the possibility of a more prolonged process of return by refugees to the rural areas. In order to strengthen the administrative capacity and self-reliance of communities receiving rehabilitation assistance, UNHCR has shifted in its program approach to encourage cost-sharing in the cross-border projects it funds. Increasingly, UNHCR requests that its NGO projects require cost-sharing by project beneficiaries so that, over time, assisted communities may absorb the total cost of the project and assume full responsibility for the administration of the project. Through cost-sharing, UNHCR expects to create incentives within assisted communities to engage all residents in the project process.

UNHCR expects that community cost-sharing ensure that all local residents will participate in funding the project because communities are unlikely in permit local residents to benefit from assistance they do not help pay for. In this way, cost-sharing minimizes the potential for disproportionate access of resources by members of the party-dominated shura or local commander. UNHCR also

anticipates that this project approach will require communal input and will result in the increasingly equal involvement in project administration by individuals residing in the assisted regions. UNHCR increasingly supports project based on this participatory approach to assistance (UNHCR 1989b).

UNHCR cross-border projects specifically target areas that have produced the greatest proportion of refugees in Afghanistan. UNHCR has identified fourteen provinces as first priority project areas. Ten of these--four provinces along the Pakistan border, three western provinces and the three provinces along Afghanistan's border with Iran--have been identified by UNHCR as having at least 50% their prewar population currently registered as refugees (see Annex II). Through June 1989, UNHCR supported twenty-four NGOs with more than eighty ongoing or pilot projects in fourteen provinces. Thirty-five percent or more of the original population of each of these provinces is believed to be living as refugees in Pakistan or Iran. Together, these provinces represent the homelands of ninety percent of the estimated refugee populations settled in Iran or Pakistan.

Areas targeted for priority relief and rehabilitation include both mujaheddin-controlled areas and zones controlled by the Kabul government. Because the majority of refugees originate from rural Afghanistan, which is

controlled by the resistance, the same degree of support is not required by UNHCR in the government-controlled urban areas. UNHCR has, however, provided relief goods to returnees through UNHCR-sponsored "peace guesthouses," which were constructed outside the cities of Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif expressly to assist urban-rural returnees. Because UNHCR is required by mandate to assist all war-affected individuals by working with both parties in the conflict, UNHCR has the potential to engage both supporters of the resistance and the Kabul government in its rehabilitation activities.

In its assistance approach, UNHCR aims to create conditions conducive to repatriation by supporting projects that provide immediate relief and basic rehabilitation assistance to the homelands of potential returnees. As a result, UNHCR does not support agricultural projects concerned with long-term rehabilitation, but attempts instead to support projects that will minimize local dependency on continued or long-term assistance (English 1989: 29). These projects take the form of emergency agricultural assistance, involving irrigation repair or the provision of improved wheat seed, fertilizer and pesticides to targeted, needy areas. UNHCR also gives preference to rural works projects that will facilitate the repatriation process by allowing relief goods to be stored or transported

in strategic locations. Because the UNHCR cross-border program explicitly prepares for the return of refugees to local areas, it creates local awareness of the fact that supporting refugee return will continue to generate valuable international assistance.

This summarizes the approaches of USAID and UNHCR, the largest international agencies supporting cross-border operations, to rehabilitation inside Afghanistan. Chapter four considers some of the constraints involved in pursuing successful and effective rehabilitation projects under conditions of war.

CHAPTER FOUR:
WHAT KIND OF CONSTRAINTS INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES FACE IN AFGHANISTAN

Both USAID and UNHCR support programs that utilize similar resources to attain different objectives. USAID's program attempts to strengthen the capacity of rural Afghanistan to govern itself and to administer assistance. UNHCR, by contrast, has more immediate objectives. UNHCR assists in the emergency rehabilitation of the regions to which refugees are most likely to return. Despite their different agendas, however, both international agencies have no option but to rely upon NGOs to implement their programs inside Afghanistan.

Given this essential constraint, the differences between these agencies are often less apparent in actual field operations. This reflects the fact that during war outside agencies cannot entirely determine the direction of assistance projects, despite their stated goals.

Both USAID and UNHCR work with extremely limited information to determine what is needed in potential project areas. Neither agency maintains a staff to conduct pre-feasibility studies in proposed project areas. Nor does

either agency fund projects based upon a comprehensive plan outlining specific rehabilitation objectives. Instead, both agencies rely upon NGOs to propose projects for potential assistance. In this way, both USAID and UNHCR have adopted a largely reactive approach to project funding, deciding upon the usefulness of projects as they are proposed rather than establishing specific criteria for NGOs to follow in designing projects.

The reasons behind this approach are different for both USAID and UNHCR. USAID originally formulated its NGO program--PVO Co-Financing and the Rural Assistance Project (RAP)--expressly to support the work of agencies already operating inside Afghanistan. Its program continues to provide largely symbolic support for viable activities affecting rural Afghanistan. At the same time, USAID does emphasize to NGOs the importance of institution-building through funded projects. Responding to the changing needs of the rural areas, for example, USAID's PVO Co-Financing Project has recently shifted towards training Afghan health workers rather than providing emergency medical care. USAID does not, however, outline specific plans for specific regions in its rehabilitation program.

By contrast, UNHCR purposely refrains from directing NGOs in their activities. This agency believes that NGOs can be

most effective in emergency rehabilitation by operating independently and experimentally in war-affected regions. UNHCR, like USAID, essentially follows the lead of NGOs in its program activities.

Both USAID and UNHCR are constrained by their conventional approach to grants funding. Despite the conditions of war, both agencies make grants to NGOs according to practices employed in funding development projects. The lack of innovation in funding has inadvertently provided NGOs substantial control in the design, implementation, and evaluation of cross-border rehabilitation. In the grant process, for example, both agencies rely entirely upon NGOs to determine the feasibility or usefulness of a proposed rehabilitation project. This means that the potential grantee is responsible for providing all information relevant to the grant. The grant process also requires that NGOs identify the potential needs of a potential project area at the beginning of the funding cycle. In this way, each NGO acts as a watchdog for its own project activities.

The grant process assumes that NGOs can determine the feasibility of a proposed project before it has received funding---that is, before it has begun. As a result, NGOs typically plan local rehabilitation assistance before they

have gained regular access to the project area. This is not always the case: some grants support ongoing rehabilitation assistance. In most cases, however, NGOs receive grants before they can test the feasibility of a proposed project. By following conventional funding approaches in exceptional circumstances, both USAID and UNHCR fail to provide a means to determine project feasibility through the grant process.

Both USAID and UNHCR encourage NGOs to ensure that local rehabilitation assistance represents what the residents of a project area want and need. What this means--and how this is ensured--is different among the NGOs. USAID promotes working with a shura, or local council, which can represent a community in making assistance requests and channel assistance into the project area. UNHCR encourages funded NGOs to work with local groups--elders, village maliks, farmers--that represent project areas in order to determine local needs. Unlike USAID, UNHCR clearly discourages the inclusion of political representatives--commanders or local party leaders--in the assistance process. The extent to which these specifications are put into practice, however, is largely left to the NGO.

Some NGOs are successful in Afghanistan precisely because they do work directly with local political leaders. The British NGO, Afghanaid, for example, has established a

considerable agricultural assistance program in the Panjshir Valley by working directly with a powerful commander, Ahmed Shah Massoud, who controls a significant part of the northeastern Afghanistan. This region is administered through an extensive, party-based council, the Shura-i-Nazar, which is structured like a governmental organization and includes representatives from several provinces. Unique in rural Afghanistan, this shura attests to the administrative capacity and mediating skills of Massoud. It also represents a politically-based organization, however successful.

Both USAID and UNHCR have supported Afghanaid in its rehabilitation operations in the Panjshir. Although UNHCR has expressed reservations over the fact that Afghanaid transferred implementing responsibility to commanders in its Panjshir-based projects, this agency continues to contribute to Afghanaid's rehabilitation efforts in the region (UNHCR 1989b). Based upon monitoring reports by Afghanaid staff, there is no indication that working with Massoud and the Jamiat party has adversely affected either distribution or local representation. By actively avoiding the appearance of political favoritism, international agencies are limited in their ability to reach some unusually organized groups in times of war--those controlled by commanders.

Finally, both USAID and UNHCR are constrained in their ability to effectively evaluate the operations of funded projects. Because these programs fund a diverse group of projects administered by a variety of NGOs, evaluation approaches vary widely. This can be explained by the fact that NGO monitors are typically local Afghan staff who rarely have any training or background in project evaluation. As a result, the agencies funding these projects are supplied by the NGOs with evaluation reports that lack any quantitative measure of project progress.

Few assistance professionals travel to project sites for evaluation for two reasons. Initially, most NGOs favored sending Afghans into Afghanistan to maintain the indigenous nature of rehabilitation projects. At the same time, the U.S. Government has prohibited NGOs receiving U.S. funds from sending Americans into Afghanistan; given the significant proportion of U.S.-based NGOs funded by USAID, this restriction has discouraged U.S. NGOs from anticipating an active role for its professional staff in evaluation activities. These constraints have influenced NGO operations and greatly affected the quality of the evaluations that USAID and UNHCR have available to them.

Both USAID and UNHCR have contributed to the poor quality of project evaluation by initially failing to set standards

for NGOs. To satisfy minimal reporting requirements, many NGOs engage a small monitoring staff to travel to project sites and report on the progress of funded projects. Due to the difficult conditions in Afghanistan, there is frequently significant delay between the time monitoring reports are expected by the funding agency and the time they finally arrive in Peshawar. For this reason, they often become irrelevant to funding decisions. Neither agency has taken steps to require an expansion of NGO monitoring staffs or a restructuring of the monitoring process. At the same time, neither agency has actively enforced the adoption of a standard evaluation format that provides some quantifiable measure of the conditions of project area and the impact of assistance. By accepting incomplete reporting from project areas, USAID and UNHCR increase the potential for wasted resources in project areas.

These are some of the ways in which USAID and UNHCR are constrained in their approach to rehabilitation inside Afghanistan. In many cases, the program approach of these agencies is largely determined by the efforts of NGOs. Despite the fact that both agencies have slightly different program objectives in Afghanistan, by working through NGOs the outcome of their efforts is often quite similar. By adopting a standard development approach to rehabilitation programs in Afghanistan, both USAID and UNHCR appear to have

become limited in their abilities are set the direction for rehabilitation inside Afghanistan. This has, in fact, become the realm of NGOs.

CHAPTER FIVE:
WHY OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE IS PROBLEMATIC INSIDE AFGHANISTAN

Although both USAID and UNHCR support rehabilitation in Afghanistan, each agency adheres to a different set of objectives. The potential implications of these efforts, however, are very much the same. By supporting projects during war, each agency is funding projects without the cooperation of the host government. This is partly what makes the case of rehabilitation in Afghanistan unique. At the same time, because these international agencies lack a government counterpart to administer this assistance, they rely entirely upon the NGOs they support inside Afghanistan to design, implement, and evaluate projects that will influence the rehabilitation process and possibly facilitate the return of the massive refugee population to the assisted rural areas. By operating this way, international agencies risk creating structures and projects that may conflict with the government potentially controlling rural Afghanistan.

During the rehabilitation process, the approaches and decisions of these NGOs--many of which are relatively inexperienced in Afghanistan--can have substantial impact on project areas. This section examines some of the more

problematic aspects of the program approaches adopted by USAID and UNHCR in the operations the support in Afghanistan.

USAID and UNHCR depend upon the funded NGOs to determine what kind of rehabilitation assistance is needed in potential project areas. USAID originally intended to engage government in these local assessments by coordinating rehabilitation efforts with the Afghan Interim Government (AIG), representing the seven-party alliance of the resistance. However, it abandoned this approach in favor of regionally-based rehabilitation undertaken by a funded NGO in consultation with members of a local shura. Working with shuras that represent a project area during war may eventually prove to be problematic in rural Afghanistan.

By strengthening the administrative capacity of regions that have remained productive during war, USAID risks establishing areas that may ultimately threaten the authority of the government that eventually controls the rural areas. By supporting shuras as implementing partners, USAID specifically risks strengthening the local authority of the individuals who comprise the shura. In most cases, decision-making by shuras receiving international assistance is dominated by local party leaders or commanders (Carter and Connor 1989: 25). Given this pattern, it seems unlikely

that local political leaders who have emerged during war will rescind their authority over local assistance projects as the war winds down and large-scale rehabilitation begins.

The USAID bias toward relatively strong, productive regions may build rural zones that are considerably more developed than other war-affected areas. This could negatively affect the stability of surrounding areas by attracting returnees to project areas during repatriation or strengthening the power base of local political leaders associated with these assistance efforts. In either case, these projects are likely to incite conflict in postwar Afghanistan. Despite the fact that these efforts were originally intended to bolster the institutional capacity of rural areas, they may actually threaten local areas as they begun to re-form during the rehabilitation process.

Rather than engage a government or counterpart in assessing local needs, UNHCR has attempted to bypass political structures altogether by working with local, non-partisan groups instead. UNHCR encourages the NGOs it funds to identify and support needy local groups in areas heavily impacted by war. By providing resources to groups that are not necessarily part of an organized local structure, NGOs risk strengthening individual groups within war-affected areas who are not necessarily responsible for representing a

larger commmunity. Because UNHCR actively encourages the participation of relatively inexperienced NGOs in these rehabilitation activities, it is likely that UNHCR-supported NGOs will be unable to distinguish the most efficient implementing partners from among potential beneficiaries. Although UNHCR and USAID encourage NGOs to work with different kinds of local groups throughout the rehabilitation process, both agencies have the potential to incite conflict among those who have direct access to resources--and those who don't--through the rehabilitation process.

USAID and UNHCR both rely heavily upon NGOs to provide information relevant to the grant process. Neither agency, however, has the capacity to confirm the reliability of information supplied by the NGOs. To question whether such information is sound, however, is not necessarily to question the reliability of the NGOs themselves. In most cases, Peshawar-based NGOs work with information that comes to them from Afghan monitoring staff or through visits by representatives of project beneficiaries inside Afghanistan. Typically, NGOs only tell to USAID or UNHCR what is told to them by Afghan contacts.

Some agencies, like International Rescue Committee, work with Afghans in Pakistan who originate from project areas.

These connections provide an important check on information and the sources behind them. International Rescue Committee, another of the few agencies funded by both USAID and UNHCR, represents an agency that supports projects in close proximity to Pakistan. Its project areas, located across the border in Paktia Province, permit regular access by Afghan staff as well as frequent visits by Afghan refugees administered by International Rescue Committee in refugee camp projects. Because these projects areas are accessible, there is a steady flow of information from various sources regarding the progress of the projects. In its ASSP project, USAID's contractor, VITA,has adopted a similar practice by assigning Area District Officers to the assisted areas. By stationing a project officer in the project area, USAID permits constant project evaluation and encourages familiarity to be established by project staff and the local beneficiaries.

Most NGOs, however, support projects further inside Afghanistan, which increases the reliance of NGOs on a limited number of sources. This arrangement can be problematic because it fails to provide a check on Afghan project monitors, who are typically untrained in evaluation and usually lack long-term familiarity with the project areas. Project reports that only draw upon the skills and observations of a limited number of monitors can promote

misinformation about projects that cannot be readily corrected. As a result, employing a conventional approach to project monitoring in rehabilitation projects can promote bias and limit the capacity of the funding agency to critique the quality of the projects it supports.

By working outside the structures of government, both USAID and UNHCR are directly supporting local areas through the provision of rehabilitation assistance. In this way, both agencies are supporting programs that strengthen a limited number of local groups. What these agencies know about these groups is necessarily limited by the constraints of war, which require that agencies work through various NGOs to support rehabilitation. By strengthening project beneficiaries, international agencies risk establishing regions that will be difficult for the eventual government controlling rural Afghanistan to absorb.

CHAPTER SIX:
WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE AT THE END OF A WAR

By supporting projects that are independent of government, international agencies risk strengthening project areas that may prove difficult for a central government to absorb following war--partly as a result of assistance. In the case of Afghanistan, both USAID and UNHCR aim to increase self-sufficiency among rural Afghans by supporting rehabilitation. To reach project areas, however, both agencies have channeled resources through NGOs, which depend largely upon political alliances and contacts as a means of reaching project areas. Rehabilitation efforts, therefore, are closely linked to the politics and principles of the project beneficiaries. This section will examine the potential implications of rehabilitation projects in the postwar period and will consider whether international agencies can design projects that will endure after the resolution of war.

In the case of Afghanistan, it appears that some formal resolution is possible for this war that has been locked in a stalemate. According to recent reports, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, the countries that have regularly armed and financed

the military operations of the Afghan resistance, currently propose that the war be settled through internationally supervised elections. Afghan guerilla groups, however, continue to resist this proposal. If the U.S.S.R. should join these countries in supporting elections to resolve the national leadership issue, then elections are likely to occur. In the event that the communist Najibullah regime retains power through elections, the international agencies that have supported rehabilitation will be faced with a dilemma: Should assistance efforts stop, although rural Afghans are likely to continue resisting control by a communist regime? Or, should rehabilitation in these project areas continue, despite the fact that these will appear to bolster the resistance and extend the conflict, despite the official resolution of war?

Given the fact that the resistance seems unwilling to support these elections, it is likely that Afghanistan will become engaged in a prolonged, regional conflict. In this scenario, USAID is unlikely to continue its humanitarian assistance activities to rural Afghanistan at the current level. Indeed, without the promise of conditions that may bring about the safe return of Afghan refugees, it is unlikely that UNHCR will continue supporting emergency rehabilitation efforts inside the country. In this scenario, the NGO presence is likely to shift considerably, with only

the most politically committed groups continuing to operate with funding from various small donors.

There is a third scenario: these two international agencies could work cooperatively with the newly elected government to assist in the rehabilitation of rural Afghanistan. Afghanistan has a tradition of weak central government. Following the resolution of war, rural Afghans are likely to assert their authority over rural territory, whether as a unified alliance or through isolated skirmishes in various regions. For USAID, supporting national rehabilitation would entail decreasing its support of regional rehabilitation and the strengthening of institutional bodies at the local level. To cooperate, USAID would necessarily channel its assistance through the central government, which would require breaking its ties with district groups supported through the ASSP area development scheme, which was itself designed to create a local implementation capacity to successfully function in the absence of government. Because USAID has funded these groups as a counterpoint to government, it is likely that shifting support to government channels would result in anti-American sentiment in former project areas.

By contrast, UNHCR is in a better position to continue working with a central government following war. UNHCR has

maintained its neutrality during the course of its cross-border operations. Indeed, UNHCR has a mandate to cooperate with both government and the opposition in any area in which it operates. Because it targets areas to which refugees are expected to return, UNHCR, however, has undertaken limited rehabilitation efforts in the government-controlled urban areas. More importantly, it seems that its projects would be difficult to transfer to a government authority, because UNHCR has specifically attempted to engage local civilian groups in its smaller-scale rehabilitation efforts. In most cases, transferring UNHCR-sponsored projects to the government would involve wresting control of privately-run projects from local beneficiaries. This would create a volatile situation in the postwar period.

Whichever international agency responds first to the changing political situation in Afghanistan, the NGOs will face difficult circumstances in project areas while responding to these changes. In several cases, USAID and UNHCR both support the activities of a single NGO operating in different areas. In most cases, NGOs that implement multiple activities work with groups that are in some way connected: activities funded from different sources may take place within an area controlled by a single commander, for example, or the project beneficiaries may belong to the same resistance party. For this reason, NGOs will face--and

create--local conflicts if they are obligated to withdraw support for a group of projects in an area in which they continue to operate with resources from the another agency. This represents only one way in which the changing policies of the international agencies USAID and UNHCR may lead to conflicts involving NGOs at the field level.

Although USAID and UNHCR adhere to different sets of objectives, the changing political situation in Afghanistan will bring to the surface many of the same constraints they face. Cooperating with an internationally-recognized government in undertaking rehabilitation will necessarily require disrupting rehabilitation activities that have already been established. Because the projects supported by NGOs through either UNHCR or USAID largely depend upon political alliances and contacts, it is less likely that the efforts of either of these agencies can be sustained or supported during the postwar period. Because these projects have been established under serious constraints, it appears that neither agency had other options available when designing its rehabilitation programs for rural Afghanistan. As a result, it seems that it will be impossible to build upon these efforts and incorporate them into a central government program after the war. These localized efforts will most likely remain a phenomenon of war, isolated from rehabilitation that takes place in conditions of peace.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agricultural Survey of Afghanistan (ASA). 1988. First Report. Peshawar, Pakistan: Swedish Committee for Afghanistan.

Agricultural Survey of Afghanistan (ASA). 1989. Second Report: Farm Power. Peshawar, Pakistan: Swedish Committee for Afghanistan.

Anderson, Jon W. 1978. "There are No More Khans Anymore: Economic Development and Tribal Change in Afghanistan," The Middle East Journal (vol 32).

Aziz, Sultan. 1989. Head, Save the Children Federation/U.S. (Quetta). Interview with the author (August 8).

Banuazizi, Ali and Myron Weiner. 1986. The State, Religion and Ethnic Politics: Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Carter, Lynn and Kerry Connor. 1989. Preliminary Investigation of Contemporary Afghan Councils. Peshawar, Pakistan: ACBAR.

Development Alernatives, Inc. (DAI). 1989. Evaluation of the Afghanistan PVO Co-Financing and Rural Assistance Projects. Washington, DC.

Dupree, Louis. 1980. Afghanistan. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

English, Richard. 1988. Voluntary Repatriation to Afghanistan. Geneva: UNHCR.

English, Richard. 1989. Interim Report on Repatriation Planning for Afghan Refugees. Geneva: UNHCR.

Etienne, Gilbert. 1972. L'Afghanistan: Ou Les Aleas de la Cooperation. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Etienne, Gilbert. 1990. Interview with the author (January 25).

Farooqi, Abdulrauf. 1990. Technical Support Services, UNHCR. Interview with the author (January 24).

Gabaudan, Michel. 1989. Head, UNHCR suboffice (Quetta, Pakistan). Interview with the author (August 6).

Gibbs, David. 1986. "The Peasant as Counter-Revolutionary," Studies in Comparative International Development (vol 21, no. 1).

IBRD. 1978. Afghanistan: The Journey to Economic Development. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Ice, Mark Edward. 1989. Head, Repatriation Unit, UNHCR Suboffice (Peshawar, Pakistan). Interview with the author (July 20).

International Labor Organization (ILO). 1978. Employment Policy Mission, Afghanistan: Project Findings and Recommendations. Geneva: ILO.

Rees, Peter. 1988. Responsible Aid for Afghanistan: Policy Proposals for Repatriation and Reconstruction (mimeo). Peshawar, Pakistan: Afghanaid.

Rees, Peter. 1989. 500 Plans for Afghanistan. Peshawar, Pakistan: Afghanaid.

Rees, Peter. 1989. Head, Afghanaid. Interview with the author (July 30).

Rubin, Barnett. 1989. "The Fragmentation of Afghanistan," Foreign Affairs (vol. 68, no. 5).

Roy, Olivier. 1986. Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shahrani, M. Nazif and Robert L. Canfield, eds. 1984. Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan: Anthropological Perspectives. Berkeley: University of California Press.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 1983. Refugee Aid and Development. Geneva: UNHCR.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 1989a. Afghanistan: Review of Cross-Border Projects 5-14 June 1989. Geneva: UNHCR.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 1989b. Afghanistan: Follow-up of Cross-Border Projects, 3-28 September 1989. Geneva: UNHCR.

United Nations Coordinator for Afghanistan (UNOCA). 1988a. Salam 3 Mission Report. Geneva: UNOCA.

United Nations Coordinator for Afghanistan (UNOCA). 1988b. Salam 1 Mission Report. Geneva: UNOCA.

United Nations Coordinator for Afghanistan (UNOCA). 1988c. Salam 5: 100 Hours in Kunar. Geneva: UNOCA.

United Nations Coordinator for Afghanistan (UNOCA). 1989a. U.N. Plan of Action 1989: Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programs Relating to Afghanistan. Geneva: UNOCA.

United Nations Coordinator for Afghanistan (UNOCA). 1989b. First Consolidated Report. Geneva: UNOCA.

United Nations Coordinator for Afghanistan (UNOCA). 1989c. Kunar: Monitoring Trip I. Geneva: UNOCA.

United Nations Coordinator for Afghanistan (UNOCA). 1990a. Second Consolidated Report. UNOCA: Geneva.

United Nations Coordinator for Afghanistan (UNOCA). 1990b. Salam Mission to Kandahar Province. Geneva: UNOCA.

U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR). 1990a. WORLD REFUGEE SURVEY: 1989 in Review. Washington, DC: American Council for Nationalities Service.

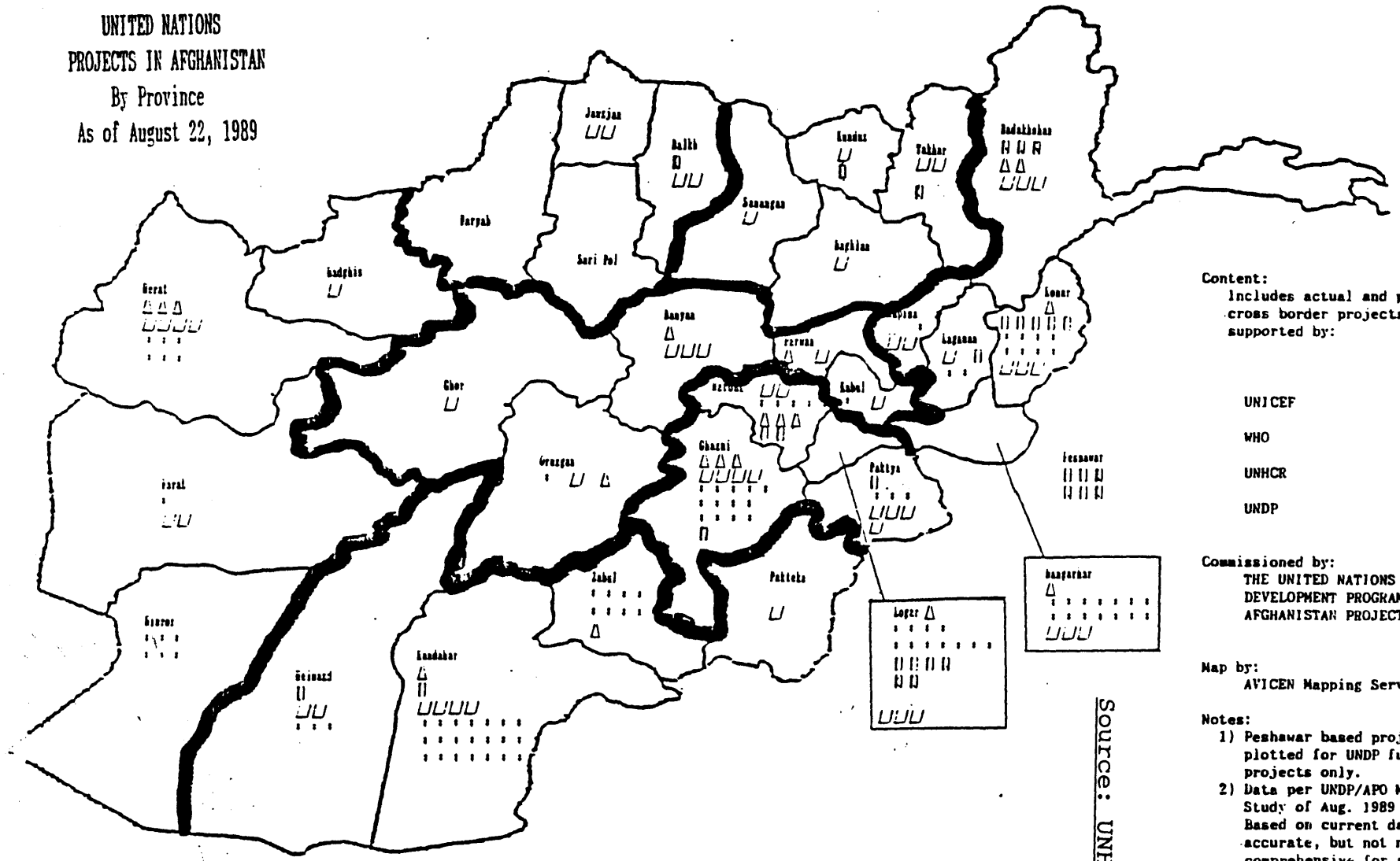
MAP NO. 3400 UNITED NATIONS
NOVEMBER 1986

Source: UNOCA

ANNEX II

ANNEX III

UNITED NATIONS
PROJECTS IN AFGHANISTAN
By Province
As of August 22, 1989



Content:
Includes actual and planned cross border projects supported by:

	Symbol
UNICEF	⌐/
WHO	△
UNHCR	*
UNDP	[]

Commissioned by:
THE UNITED NATIONS
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
AFGHANISTAN PROJECT OFFICE

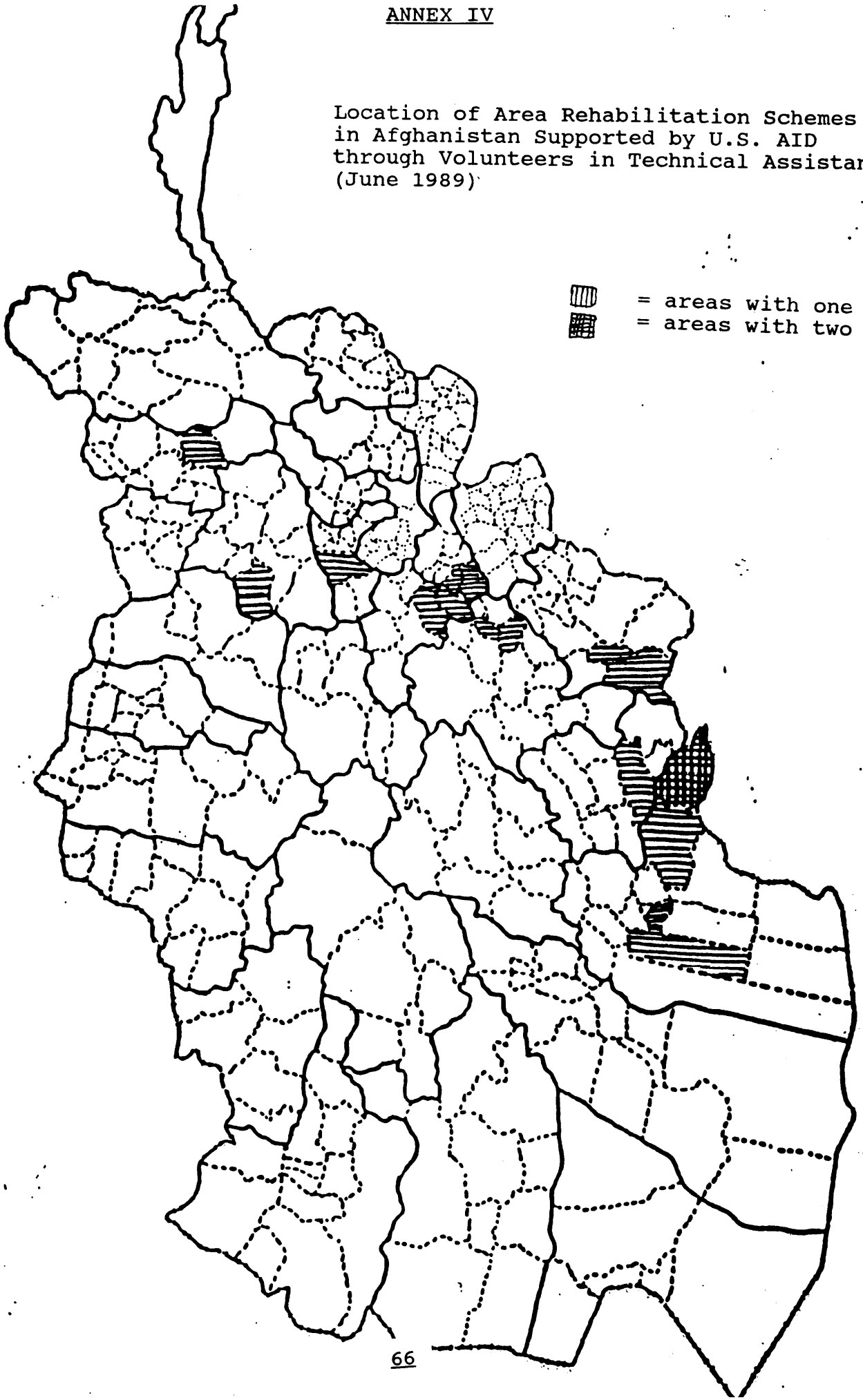
Map by:
AVICEN Mapping Service

Notes:
1) Peshawar based projects plotted for UNDP funded projects only.
2) Data per UNDP/APO Monitoring Study of Aug. 1989
Based on current data, which i accurate, but not necessarily comprehensive for all agencies

Source: UNHCR

ANNEX IV

Location of Area Rehabilitation Schemes (ARS) in Afghanistan Supported by U.S. AID through Volunteers in Technical Assistance (VITA (June 1989)



Source: U.S. Agency for International Development
Office of the AID Representative for Afghan Affairs